

THE

COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

US ISSN 0010-1443

P. O. Box 4411

Huntsville, Alabama 35815

J. C. Spilman, Editor

Volume 36, No. 1

January, 1996

Serial No. 101



Sydney Martin: Wood's Hibernia Halfpence
Pages 1593 - 1599

Gary Trudgen: Breen's "Tory Coppers"
Page 1600

JCS/MJH: Corded Border Libertas Americana
Pages 1601 - 1603

Frank Steimle: Shield Designs on Connecticut Coppers
Pages 1604 - 1606

Miscellaneous Rumblings
and
Ask the Editors
Pages 1607 - 1610

Sequential page 1592

WOOD'S HIBERNIA HALFPENCE

An Analysis & Categorization

by

Sydney F. Martin; Doylestown, PA

(TN -176)

1. PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to develop a taxonomy for Wood's Hibernia Halfpence. The methodology employed will parallel that which I used for Wood's Hibernia Farthings¹. As in the case of the farthings, if the scheme presented herein is adopted, it will allow collectors to more precisely describe their specimens, a situation which has demonstrably not been the case.

The history behind Wood's Hibernia Halfpence parallels that of his Farthings, which is summarized in my earlier cited article, and will not be repeated here. One point, however, is worth revisiting. In a comment on the article² as well as in his excellent book³, Phil Mossman has observed that there is no documentary evidence to support the contention these coppers were purchased in bulk and shipped to the colonies. Though strictly true, Hibernias have been more-or-less accepted by American collectors as colonially relevant.

2. DISCUSSION OF TYPES AND SUBTYPES

Many obverse and reverse types/subtypes are found on Wood's Hibernia halfpence. These are summarized in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Obverse types are denoted by an Arabic number, while in the case of reverses, the type is an upper case letter. (This conforms to type representation conventions first proposed by Crosby and used with most categorized colonial coins. Thus, when dealing only with types (as opposed to subtypes and varieties), we can indicate an obverse-reverse die pair by showing the obverse and reverse indicators separated by a “-” as in 3-F (which would indicate a Wood's Hibernia halfpence with obverse lettering “GEORGIUS · DEI · GRATIA · REX ·” and a harp right reverse with a “· HIBERNIA · 1723 ·” legend. If one wishes to consider subtypes, it follows that the designator would be of the form “3-Fa” (same as 3-F but noted as having ten harpstrings and a large “3” in the date). Though I am working on identifying all the varieties that I can, this paper will deal only with types and subtypes — to be followed by one addressing varieties sometime in the future. From a nomenclature viewpoint, if “N” is the obverse type, with “M” being the reverse type and “j” the reverse subtype, then a complete coin descriptor is N.q-Mj.p, where “q” and “p” are sequentially assigned variety numbers.

Varieties differ from each other in several primary ways:

- (a) Many device punches were made and used, as for the bust of King George or the figure of Hibernia. These device punches differ one to the other in small ways that are not very “naked eye” noticeable. For instance, I have noted four distinct hair styles for George, two different ribbon types, and (continued following Table 1 >>>>)

¹ End Notes on page 1599

TYPE	DESCRIPTION OF DEVICES	DESCRIPTION OF LEGEND
1	Laureate head of George I facing right facing right. Head appears narrow, due to short hair tightly pulled together and tied with a ribbon showing two small ends. Neck is very long.	GEORGIVS D : G : REX •
2	Laureate head of George I facing right. Full curls. Proportions are good. Hair tied with a ribbon having two long ends. [This is the most common head type.]	GEORGIUS • D : G : REX •
3	Head is similar to 2, but larger (23mm from the point of the bust to the top of the topmost curl; versus 21mm for type 2). Usually on a large planchet (29-30mm).	GEORGIUS • DEI • GRATIA • REX •
4	Laureate head of George I facing right. Full curls. Proportions are good. Hair tied with a ribbon having two long ends. [This is the most common head type.] Same as Type 2.	GEORGIUS • DEI • GRATIA • REX •
5	Same as 4	GEORGIUS • DEI • GRATIA • REX •
6	Same as 4	GEORGIUS DEI GRATIA REX
7	Laureate head of George I facing right. Squat head and a bull neck. Ribbon holding hair has longer ends than 1 but shorter than 2.	GEORGIUS • DEI • GRATIA • REX •
8	Same type of head as type 2 above; however, the head is a little squattier and the facial features are more rounded.	GEORGIUS • DEI • GRATIA • REX • [The so-called "farthing layout," with the second stop over the bust.]
9	Laureate head of George I facing right. Heavy curls, extending over forehead. Shows a large goiter-like bulge at the throat.	GEORGIUS • DEI • GRATIA • REX •
10	Head similar to type 2.	GEORGIUS • DEI • GRATIA • REX • [The "DEI" is directly over the bust.]

OBSERVATIONS:
Device punch differences include positioning of the laurel leaves, ribbon type, hair type, shape of nose and mouth, texturing on bust, etc.; further, various letter punches can be noted. These differences, as well as those arising from the positioning of the devices with respect to the legends, the styles of the lettering itself, and the particulars of the punctuation, determine the obverse varieties.

TABLE 1 -- TYPES OF OBVERSES

three different laurel crown styles. In the case of reverses, device punch differences include the style of Hibernia's belt, the shading in and shape of her robes, and the like. [Note: different numbers of harp strings, which appear to have been entered by hand after the device punch was hubbed onto the die, have been taken as different subtypes — primarily because of their ease of recognition in conditions of fine or better.]

- (b) Several different sets of letter punches were used. For example, an "A" on one variety may not be of the same shape/style as that on another (or indeed, may differ from another "A" on the same coin). [Note: I have elected to treat as subtypes rather than varieties "large 3 in date" and "small 3 in date" halfpence — this is simply because earlier writers have distinguished between them, and they are well known and recognized.]
- (c) The alignment of the device/letter punches with respect to each other.

TYPE & SUBTYPE	TYPE DESCRIPTION		SUBTYPE DISCRIMINATOR
	Device	Explanation	
A	Hibernia is seated frontwards, playing a harp to her right. She has her head turned towards an extensive rock formation in the right field. [This is called "Harp Left" due to the harp's position as seen by the viewer.]	• HIBERNIA • /1722 [1722 under exergue line.]	Has 8 harp strings.
Ba	Hibernia seated, facing viewers left, playing a harp to her right. [A "Harp Left" type.]	• HIBERNIA • 1722 •	Has 7 harp strings.
Bb	Same	Same	Has 8 harp strings.
Bc	Same	Same	Has 9 harp strings.
Bd	Same	Same	Has 10 harp strings.
Be	Same	Same	Has 11 harp strings.
C	Hibernia seated, facing to the viewers left. Her harp is on the viewers right. She holds a palm branch in her upraised right arm. [A "Harp Right" variety, due to the position as seen by the viewer.]	• HIBERNIA • 1722 •	Has 11 harp strings.
Da	Same	• HIBERNIA • 1723/2 • [3 over 2]	Has 11 harp strings. Large "3"
Db	Same	• HIBERNIA • 1723/2 • [3 over 2]	Has 11 harp strings. Small "3"
E	Same	HIBERNIA • 1723 • [NOTE: • = star.]	
Fa	Same	• HIBERNIA • 1723 •	Has 10 harp strings. Large "3"
Fb	Same	Same	Has 11 harp strings. Large "3."
Fc	Same	Same	Has 12 harp strings. Large "3."
Fd	Same	Same	Has 11 harp strings. Small "3."
Fe	Same	Same	Has no harp strings. Small "3."
Ga	Same	HIBERNIA • 1723 •	Has 10 harp strings. Small "3."
Gb	Same	Same	Has 11 harp strings. Large "3."
Gc	Same	Same	Has 11 harp strings. Small "3."
Gd	Same	Same	Has 12 harp strings. Small "3."
Ha	Same	HIBERNIA • 1723	Has 11 harp strings. Small "3."
Hb	Same	Same	Has 11 harp strings. Large "3."
I	Same	HIBERNIA • 1723 • •	Has 11 harp strings.
J	Same	HIBERNIA • 1724 • [Legend centered 9:00 to 3:00.]	Has 11 harp strings.
K	Same	HIBERNIA • 1724 • [Legend mostly left.]	Has 11 harp strings.
L	Same	HIBERNIA • 1724	Has 11 harp strings.
M		HIBERNIA • 1724 • [NOTE: Hibernia completely to the left side of coin.]	
N	Same	HIBERNIA • /1724 [1724 under exergue line.]	Has 11 harp strings.
O	Crossed sword and trident, tied with a triple loop knot.	REGIT • VNVS • VTROQUE / * 1724 • [*1724 under exergue line.] [* = 7-petal flower.]	
P	Device identical to Bb	• HIBERNIA • 1724 •	8 strings.
Q	Device identical to Bb	• HIBERNIA • 1723 •	8 strings; small "3".

NOTES:

- (1) Reverse Fe did not have harp strings engraved on the die after the Hibernia device punch was hubbed onto it.
- (2) The "Beaded Cincture" type shown by Breen (No. 159) is considered a variety under the definitions of this paper.
- (3) The "large 3" versus "small 3" could be argued to be only varieties; however, I have treated them as subtypes both because of the easily noted difference and because of historical considerations.
- (4) Some may prefer to think of Da and Db as varieties of Fb and Fd, respectively; however, I prefer to think of them as transitional types.
- (5) Other device punch differences include shading lines in Hibernia's robe; different letter punches are seen. Relative positioning of the device/letter punches differ among varieties.

When all the various combinations are considered, it is apparent that a huge number of varieties could exist. Indeed, various writers have indicated the number of varieties of Hibernia Halfpence to be in the 200 - 400 range.^{4,5}

For interest, and to demonstrate the lack of a consistent method for referring to die combinations, let us examine other nomenclatures that have been used by earlier writers. This is summarized in Table 3, which shows all known obverse/reverse combinations using my identification system in the first column. The second column is the Breen number⁴ for that combination, the third column is the Nelson indicator⁶, and the fourth column is the Seaby⁷ (Seaby is a noted author dealing with coins of Great Britain; Wood's Hibernia pieces are also considered to be Irish) indicator. The fifth column gives a citation for where a picture of that combination can be found, using the more famous colonial coin auctions and references as sources^{8,9,10,11}. Finally, in the sixth column is indicated whether the type is generally considered to be a pattern, a mule, or other "non-coinage" emission.

YEAR	MARTIN	BREEN	NELSON	SEABY [1961 ed.]	EXAMPLES	NOTES
1722	1-A	143			Norweb 3423; Roper 98	"Rock Halfpenny"
1722	4-Ba			H174	Norweb 3426	
1722	4-Bb			and	Norweb 3427-3430	
1722	4-Bc			H175	Norweb 3432	
1722	4-Bd				Norweb 3435	
1722	4-Be				Norweb 3436	
1722	4-C	146	4 (Pattern)	H177	Norweb 3437	
1722	5-Bc	144		H174, H175	Norweb 3431	
1722	5-C	146		H177	Norweb 3440	
1723/2	4-Da	152		H179	Norweb 3445	
1723/2	4-Db	153			Norweb 3446	
1723	4-Fb	154			Norweb 3460	
1723	4-Fd				Norweb 3458	
1723	4-Fe	154			Author's Collection	Previously Unknown.
1723	4-Ga	157			Author's Collection	Previously Unknown.
1723	4-Gb	155			Breen 155	
1723	4-Gc	157	Nelson 8	H181	Breen 157	
1723	4-Gd				Author's Collection	
1723	4-Ha	161		H185	Breen 161	
1723	4-Hb				Author's Collection	Previously Unknown.
1723	4-I	160			Breen 160	
1723	5-Fb				CNL page 1306	
1723	6-Ha				Author's Collection	Previously Unknown.
1723	7-E	149	9	H184	Breen 149	
1723	3-Fa				Breen 150 (notes)	
1723	3-Fb		Nelson 5 (Pattern)		Norweb 3463	
1723	3-Fc				Breen 150 (notes)	
1723	8-Gb				Norweb 3464	
1724	4-J	163			Norweb 3493	
1724	4-K	166	11	H188	Norweb 3496	
1724	4-L	165	11 (Note)			
1724	8-L	164	11 (Note)	H187	Norweb 3494	
1724	9-N		13		Norweb 3491; Taylor 2020	
1724	9-O		15		Norweb 3492	
1724	10-M	162			Breen 162	
1724	P-Q				CNL page 345	Mule (in pewter)

TABLE 3. DIE COMBINATIONS

It is clear from Table 3 that my assertion that no categorization scheme has been developed which begins to address the various obverse/reverse type combinations, let alone the various varieties that exist, is correct. Breen, Nelson, and Seaby seem more interested in generic categorizations.

3. OFF-METAL STRIKINGS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATION PIECES

Several silver and other off-metal halfpence exist or are authoritatively reported. The ones I have seen, or can identify sufficiently well from photographs or written descriptions, have their die pairs listed in Table 4.

YEAR	MARTIN	Breen Rarity	Norweb Rarity	Other Rarity	MARTIN ASSESSMENT OF RARITY
1722	1-A	Extra Rare	R7	Roper: V. Rare	R7
1722	4-Ba				R3+
1722	4-Bb				R3+
1722	4-Bc	R1 as a type.			R3+
1722	4-Bd				R3+
1722	4-Be				R3+
1722	4-C				R3
1722	5-Bc				R5
1722	5-C				R5
1723/2	4-Da	R1			Less common than 4-Db. Probably R3.
1723/2	4-Db	R1			More common than 4-Da. Probably R2.
1723	4-Fb	R1			Not common, probably R3.
1723	4-Fd				Probably R2.
1723	4-Fe				I've only seen one; presumably R7.
1723	4-Ga				R4
1723	4-Gb	R1			R2
1723	4-Gc	R1			R1
1723	4-Gd				R2
1723	4-Ha	Rare			R3
1723	4-Hb				R4
1723	4-I	Rare			R5
1723	5-Fb			CNL: Unique	I've encountered 1 other. Probably R6.
1723	6-Ha				I've only seen one; presumably R7.
1723	7-E	Extra Rare			R7
1723	3-Fa				Not sure it exists.
1723	3-Fb	Very Rare			R6
1723	3-Fc				Not sure it exists.
1723	8-Gb				Probably R6
1724	4-J	Unique?			R7
1724	4-K	R1			R5
1724	4-L	R1			R3
1724	8-L	Extra Rare			R5
1724	9-N		R7+	Taylor:Hi R7	R7+
1724	9-O		R7+		R7+
1724	10-M	Extra Rare			R6+
1724	P-Q			CNL: Unique	R8

NOTE: Martin rarity indicators are subject to adjustment as additional specimens are examined -- these indicators must be regarded as tentative, but they are probably correct in a relative way.

TABLE 4. RARITY OF DIE COMBINATIONS

4. RARITY OF TYPES

Table 5 estimates rarity by obverse/reverse combinations, using the "normal" convention of R1 (common) through R8 (one or two specimens known). Terminology of the cataloger is used; if they did not show/describe a rarity, none is indicated. Having studied most of the available literature, and examined a large number of these halfpence, my estimate of the rarity is indicated as well. Remember that this is a *type* rarity — not that of any specific variety within that type.

Nelson #	Breen # (or Other Citation)	Martin Type	Kind of OMS/Special Strike	Rarity
N3	Breen 144 (Seaby H175)	4-B?	Proofs in Copper	Not Common
N3	Breen 145 (Seaby H176)	4-B?	Proofs in Silver	R8
N4	Breen 148	4-C	Proofs in Silver	R7
N5	Breen 151 (Seaby H182)	4-F?	Proofs in Silver and Copper	R7
N11	Breen 156	4-Gb	Silver	R7
none	Breen 167 (Seaby H188)	4-J	Silver Proof	R9
N13	none	8-N	Proofs in Copper and Bell Metal	R7+
N15	none	8-O	Proofs in Copper	R7+
none	[Colonial Newsletter, pg 345]	P-Q	Pewter (Mostly lead)	R9

NOTES: (1) Breen lists a #163 in silver; I don't think it was silver; rather, I think he probably saw the Norweb Lot 3493 (Ex King Farouk) before it was determined to be silver-plated.
 (2) When a type is given with a "?" for the subtype indicator, enough data was simply not available to make a determination of the proper subtype (e.g., poor photos).
 (3) Rarity ratings are taken as the "average" of those provided by the cited source(s).

TABLE 5. OFF-METAL AND SPECIAL PRESENTATION STRIKINGS

5. TECHNICAL DATA

Halfpence were coined in copper in London and shipped to Bristol for trans-shipment to Ireland (Wood's mint for coining Rosa Americana pieces was located in Bristol, and provided a base of operations). Based on a sample of 50 halfpence, coinage data are provided in Table 6.

The nominal weight for these coins should have been 116.67 grains (for 60 halfpence to the pound), so it appears that on average the halfpence were about 5.2% lightweight. This finding is in contradistinction to the assay conducted under the auspices of Sir Isaac Newton, which found the average weight to be within tolerance (unless this variance was considered tolerable.) Though probable that coins can be found outside these indicated ranges, they should be regarded as unusual.

• Weight (grains)	
- Maximum	136.6
- Minimum	93.4
- Mean	110.6
- Standard Deviation	8.3
• Diameter (millimeters)	
- Maximum	27.3
- Minimum	24.9
- Mean	26.1
- Standard Deviation	.6
• Orientation (degrees)	
- Maximum	225
- Minimum	170
- Mean	180.9
- Standard Deviation	7.3

TABLE 6. Technical Parameters

Occasionally, one sees halfpence that are slightly out-of-round and/or slightly off-center, though I have never seen either major off-center or multiple strike errors. Clipped planchets and straight edges are not common. Planchet quality is quite good, with major problems (striae, cracks, natural holes) not often encountered.

However, dies seemed to have been used to the point of disintegration, as can be noted from: (1) numerous late-state dies showing heavy rusting in the fields and/or chipping around the edges and letters, and (2) frequently encountered examples showing extensive die cracking almost to the point of fragmentation.

END NOTES

- 1 Martin, Sydney, "Wood's Hibernia Farthings, An Analysis & Categorization;" *The Colonial Newsletter*: Volume 34, No. 3, pp 1457-1464, November, 1994.
- 2 *The Colonial Newsletter*, April 1995, sequential page 1501.
- 3 Mossman, Philip L., *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation*, NY, NY: ANS, 1993; pp 130-135. [ISBN 0-89722-249-0]
- 4 Breen, Walter, *Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins*; NY, NY: Doubleday, 1988; pp 27-30. [ISBN 0-385-14207-2]
- 5 Spilman, James C., Private correspondence with the Author, 29 March 1994. Mr. Spilman suggests that there may be as many as 400+ die variety combinations of Hibernia Halfpence.
- 6 Philip, Dr. Nelson, "The Coinage of William Wood, 1722-1733;" Brighton, England: W.C. Weight, 1903.
- 7 Seaby, Herbert A. (editor), *British Copper Coins and Their Values*; London, England: Seaby Publications, 1961.
- 8 Bowers and Merena, Inc., "The Norweb Collection Part III," 15 Nov 1988, pp 243-254. Auction catalog, Michael Hodder, researcher.
- 9 Bowers and Merena, Inc., "The Frederick B. Taylor Collection," 26-28 March 1987, pp 139-40. Auction catalog.
- 10 Stack's, "The John L. Roper, 2nd; Collection of Colonial & Early American Coins," 8-9 December 1983; pp 39-45. Auction Catalog.
- 11 Spilman, J.C., Editor, *The Colonial Newsletter*, sequential pages 345 and 1306.



BREEN'S "TORY COPPERS"

by Gary A. Trudgen

(TN-177)

Recently a Patron sent a 1747 George II halfpence to the CNL Foundation stating that he believed it to be a "NY colonial." A friend, who had shown him the section on The Mould-Atlee "Tory Coppers" in *Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia of U. S. and Colonial Coins*, disagreed. Of specific interest was Breen's coin type 1002 (p. 99), the 1747 dated "Tory copper" labeled Vlack 1-47A. The Patron asked if the Foundation "...could clear this matter."

In Breen's description of this variety he states that "Any offered from different dies must show identical letter punches." This vague statement has caused considerable confusion. Our Patron understood it to mean that there is more than one variety of "Tory copper" dated 1747. He pointed out that even though his coin has a different letter arrangement (position of the legend with respect to the central device) than illustrated by coin type 1002, other illustrated "Tory coppers" had the same close lettering and letter arrangement as his and he therefore believed his coin to be a "Tory copper."

In reality, the Patron's coin is not a "Tory copper," but rather a genuine regal halfpence minted in London at the Tower Mint. Also, there is only one known variety of "Tory copper" dated 1747, that being Vlack 1-47A. I believe that Breen's poorly worded statement was an attempt to caution that other 1747 George II halfpence exist and unless the legends exactly match the illustrated coin, it isn't a Mould-Atlee "Tory copper." This means the legends must have the same letter arrangement and also that the letters which comprise the legends must have been made from the same letter punches that were used to prepare the dies that struck Vlack 1-47A.

Breen separated his "Tory coppers," often called Machin's Mills coppers or more lately Atlee halfpence, into two groups. First, he listed the specimens he believed were minted at Machin's Mills, coin types 992 through 997. Next he listed the specimens (1002 through 1008) that he thought were the joint product of Walter Mould and James F. Atlee. My research uncovered a third group that can be extracted from Breen's two groups. This third group consists of Vlack 17-87A, 17-87B and 17-87E from coin type 996 and Vlack 1-47A or coin type 1002.

The three distinct groups of "Tory coppers" appear to have one common denominator, that being James F. Atlee. Thus, a more logical label for these coppers is Atlee halfpence. The first group of Atlee halfpence, or most of Breen's Mould-Atlee "Tory Coppers," appear to have been minted in New York City, probably at Atlee's porter brewery along the Hudson River, circa 1786. It is believed that Walter Mould was involved with this coinage operation because several of the letter punches found on the *Constellatio Nova* and *Immune Columbia* dies, coin types that Mould has been associated with, were used to prepare the dies for this group of Atlee halfpence. The second group of Atlee halfpence are struck from dies which were prepared from the same date and letter punches. Very interestingly, some of these same punches were used to prepare the dies that struck the famous Brasher doubloon. Thus, the second group of Atlee halfpence is associated with the coinage operation that produced the various New York issues, which are normally attributed to Ephraim Brasher and John Bailey. The third group of Atlee halfpence is believed to have been struck by the Machin's Mills operation, near Newburgh, NY, in which the operator's son states that James F. Atlee served as the engraver.

For further details on Atlee halfpence and James F. Atlee see "James Atlee's Imitation British Halfpence," published in the March, 1987 issue of CNL and "Samuel and James F. Atlee: Machin's Mills Partners," published in the October 1992 issue of CNL. [CNL-92, pgs. 1317-1352.]

Corded Border Libertas Americana Medal**(CS-4)**

- Specimens furnished by Arvid Johnson; Oak Park, IL and Mike Peters; Rockford, IL
Comments by ye Editor

In March of 1783, Benjamin Franklin wrote to his friend the famous British jurist Sir William Jones, from whom he had earlier sought advice on the design for a medal to commemorate the American victories over the British at Saratoga and Yorktown in 1777 and 1781, a letter containing the following statement:

"The engraving of my medal, which you know was projected before the peace, is now finished. None are yet struck in hard metal, but will be in a few days."

Franklin's medal, engraved by French artist and personal friend Augustin Dupré from drawings by Esprit-Antoine Gebilin, quickly became one of the outstanding medallic art creations of the era.¹

Because of the appearance, today, of two specimens of the *Libertas Americana* in pewter (previously known only in gold, silver and bronze) there is suddenly some, possible, additional significance to Franklin's words "None as yet struck in hard metal,". Does this statement suggest that some specimens, possibly die trials, had been struck in a soft metal, most likely pewter? This idea is pure speculation, nothing more. We have therefore categorized this article as one of our Conjecture and Speculation items and assigned it the listing CS-4 in the CNL Index system.

To expand on this conjecture, suppose that Franklin did have some die trials struck in pewter for his review and approval prior to striking of the production specimens. Suppose, further, that he might not have liked some feature of the specimens and decided on a change, which he ordered incorporated. Or perhaps the first medals struck, two specimens in Gold presented to Louis XVI and his queen Marie Antoinette in April of 1783 were different from the later strikes? Ten years later the swish and chunk of the guillotine ended the rule of both the King and Queen and their two gold *Libertas Americana* medals vanished, perhaps forever.

Early in our examination of the two pewter specimens ye Editor gave them the names "Alpha" and "Omega" representing the earliest and latest die states of the *Libertas Americana* dies. Later we concluded, with the help of others, principally Associate Editor Michael Hodder, that the two specimens might be casts rather than having been struck from dies. But casts of what, and why? Ye Editor is not convinced that these specimens actually are casts -- but knows of no certain method to prove that a pewter specimen is a cast. If they actually are casts as Mike Hodder believes, they are both exceptionally good ones so we should not be too astonished if later scientific testing should suggest a different conclusion.

An enlarged photograph of the corded border specimen is presented on page 1603. If any of our Patrons can furnish additional clues or ideas regarding this corded edge specimen we will appreciate your inputs. A great deal more work with these specimens will be necessary before any firm conclusions can be reached. The "Omega" appears to be a reproduction of a rather worn conventional *Libertas*, and is not illustrated here.

We have made FilmPrints of these two specimens and compared them one with the other, but not yet with other specimens struck in other metals. One of the most interesting findings is that the line of dots in the field mentioned by Mike correspond exactly in spacing and curvature with the edge pattern of the corded and are, further, incuse on the raised portion of the letters LIB in the legend as though the tool used to produce the corded somehow physically touched the surface of the medal after striking (or casting) and thereby produced the dot pattern. Mike Hodder's observations appear on the next page.

JCS

¹ *Medals Commemorating Battles of the American Revolution*, Vladimer and Elvira Clain-Stefanelli, The National Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

An Intriguing Cast *Libertas Americana* Medal

Comments by CNL Associate Editor Michael Hodder

Ye editor and I have been studying the medal illustrated on the next page for some time but we have not come to any firm conclusions about it. Patrons will immediately notice why we think this is an "intriguing" specimen.

The medal is a cast and not struck specimen. The piece weighs 56.44 grams (=870.98 grains). Its diameters are: from edge to edge, 49.3 mm (vertical), 49.3 mm (horizontal); from inside rim to rim, 42.7 mm (horizontal), 42.7 mm (vertical). It is 4.1 mm thick measured across the edge at several places. Ye editor determined a specific gravity of 9.591 and suggests a composition of 56% lead, 44% tin. This is equivalent to what used to be called "organ pipe metal" and is very close to standard "half and half" solder (50% tin, 50% lead).

All other things being equal, we would not have spent much time on this obvious cast. However, notice the configuration of the rims on both sides. First, there are three components to the rims of this piece. The usually seen bronze and rarer silver strikes have rims composed of two elements: a slightly raised border like a "frame" around the design, followed by the broad rim typical of Paris Mint products of the late 18th century. On this piece, the raised "frame" is followed by a higher border, then there is a channel, followed by an outer rim which is much narrower than that seen on the struck medals. Second, and most intriguing, notice the anomalous second rim: this is corded! Such a feature has never been seen on a *Libertas Americana* medal before.

On the obverse of this piece there is no sign of the die cud usually seen below 4 [JUIL.], due to the presence of the corded rim. There is an evenly spaced line of "dots" depressed below the surface of the table, from 4 in date left through LIB, neatly paralleling the inner rim and disappearing between B and E of LIBERTAS. This feature roughly corresponds with the line of roughness seen on many struck bronze medals, where the die appears to have been failing. The triangular arrangement of breaks below final A of AMERICANA are present on this piece, but are very mushy due to its being cast. The reverse is as seen on the struck medals, save for the corded rim.

So, what do we have here? We know it's a cast and that all known genuine *Libertas Americana* medals (and clichés) were struck. But, what was this piece cast from, what was the prototype? There are a couple of possibilities that come to my mind as I write this: 1) a genuine medal whose rims were ground off, a new rim configuration clamped on, and then used as a mold for casting this piece; or 2) a cast from a variety of the original never previously seen before and now lost, which had the corded rim.

Whatever the prototype was, the medal is the first of its kind I have seen. Agreed, it's a cast copy. What interests ye editor and me is: what was it cast from and/or how was it made? Any guesses from our Patrons?

MJH



Corded Border
LIBERTAS
AMERICANA
in Pewter



Cord
Detail



Enlargement
1.5X and 3X

SHIELD DESIGNS ON CONNECTICUT COPPERS (TN-178)
● ● **from Frank Steimle; Wanamassa, NJ**

Tom Delory's AE-13 inquiry about the design on the shields of Connecticut coppers and "ye Editor's" reply (CNL No. 98, page 1474-75) is an opportunity to open up a discussion of this feature of these coins. Much has been written about Connecticut coppers attribution, die linkages, mints and minters. The series has been discussed and cataloged in the past by Dickeson¹, Crosby², Hall³, Miller⁴, Breen⁵, and Mossman⁶ (endnotes are on page 1606) according to date, obverse bust style, legends and punctuation, weight, etc. but one feature of the design of these pieces is seldom discussed, the variable designs on the reverse shield. In fact, the above major published works on Connecticut state coppers and Breen's extensive comments in the 1975 Pine Tree EAC auction catalog, similar catalogs and various notes and discussions by various colonial coin students in *The Colonial Newsletter*, discuss almost every other design attribute of these coppers, such as letters, leaves in wreath, punctuation, ornamental spacers and globe lines, except this design aspect.

The only references I could find, in a review of common sources of information on Connecticut coppers, that even notes that the shield on the reverse of these coppers has the state seal, grape vines, on it was in Newman⁷, and an early note in *The Colonial Newsletter* (1964, seq. pg 95). The latter was in reference to an even earlier 1942 *Numismatist* (55:102) article by H. H. Kurth concerned with justifying the inclusion of the proposed Machin's Mills variety 101-D in the Connecticut series, despite the George III obverse, because its reverse had the "arms of the state" on it.

This lack of interest in this design feature of Connecticut coppers is curious because there have been notes or comments published on the shield features of Vermont (modified British or wheat), New York and some pattern coppers with state arms on the shields, and even New Jersey coppers (number of pales on the shields). Perhaps the shield device has been ignored because it was a high point that soon wore off when the coppers circulated and thus is not reliable for variety attribution.

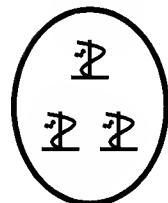
The 1785 Act to establish a mint for coining coppers in Connecticut made no stipulation as to what was to be on "Ms. Liberty's" shield⁸. The use of the grapevine goes back to the first Connecticut state seal of 1644, as noted by Jim Spilman in his AE-13 response. This earliest use showed a vineyard of fifteen, supported vines bearing fruit. In 1711 the state seal changed to showing only three vines with a hand on the right side pointing to the vines. However, the use of the triple grape vine in the State's seal goes back to at least 1709 on paper currency, with several variations in the arrangements and details of the vines being used over the years, without the pointing hand. Although, after 1776 only a single vine appeared on the state's paper currency⁹. These later, single vine issues would be most familiar to the public and coiners of Connecticut coppers, but do not appear on the coins. This variability suggests that there was no standard vine arrangement in the use of the Connecticut state seal during the colonial / pre-federal period.

In the last decade or so, a number of outstanding colonial collections have been auctioned, that were cataloged with excellent photographs of a large number of Connecticut varieties in high condition, such as Norweb III (Bowers and Merena, 1988), Taylor (Bowers and Merena, 1989), Hessberg (Stacks, 1992) and others. I have used these photographs to augment my own collection to study the reverses of Connecticut coppers.

From this study of photographs or actual coins of most varieties, I define five major Connecticut copper reverse shield types, with one subtype. These types are defined on the basis of the shapes, arrangement and level of detail on the grape vines, the lack of any design, or the use of

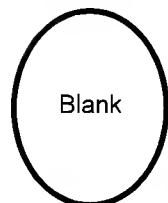
a Vermont Britannia-style reverse. These types are presented in roughly the chronology of issuance. Catalog photographs are no substitute for a magnified examination of the actual coin, so I will not be disturbed if errors in some of my classifications are exposed.

Type A



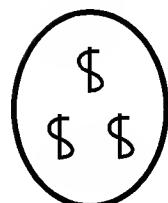
The shield for this type has a pyramidal arrangement (a single vine over a pair) with minimal effort by die engravers to include grape clusters on the vines and the vine tips curve left. This shield type is found on the reverses of all 1785 varieties that are considered to be the product of Abel Buell and the "Committee for Coining Copper" (CCC), with the exception of the "African Heads", Miller 4.1-F.4 and 4.2-F.6. The Type A dies are all thought to be hand cut individually, without the use of any master hubs.

Type B



The shield on this reverse type appears to be blank and is the most common type of shield devise. It is found on all reverse dies attributed to Buell and the CCC 1786 reverses (although reverses A and D.I-D.4 and Draped Bust Right obverses are thought to be from the Rahway, NJ mint and James Atlee, see below); most 1787 reverses (especially with Draped Bust Left obverses, except: reverses D, F, G.1-.2, H, K, P - S and W, that are mostly mated with the Machin's Mills and Atlee's Mailed Bust Right or George III obverses); Morristown-Walter Mould, NJ mint reverses M and L, and possibly irregular reverse WW; some other probably out-of-state mints, such as Bailey's mint in New York City, that could be the source of the Miller 1.2 "Mutton Head" varieties¹⁰; and most 1788 Draped Bust Left reverses (except reverses L, P, O, and Q). Hubs were used in the preparation of many or all of these dies.

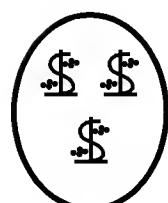
Type C



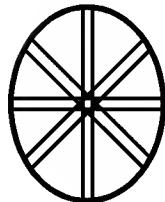
This shield type includes a pyramidal vine arrangement similar to Type A, but with the vine tips curving to the right (like dollar signs, \$) with no attempt to include any grape clusters. This reverse type includes all the exceptions to the previous reverse Type B, noted above, and are thought to be products of Machin's Mills or the Buells.

There is one subtype, "C.1" - the shield type on the 1788 reverse D. This shield has the same vine arrangement that defines this type, but the vines are unusually tight clustered. The reverse with this shield subtype is thought to be a product of Machin's Mills and may represent a limited effort by a new or apprentice die engraver. This reverse is combined with a "1788" MBR obverse, Miller 2, a reuse of a "1787" DBL, Miller 16.1, and a counterfeit George III English halfpenny, Vlack 13. These issues are products of the Machin's Mills, NY operation.

Type D



This shield design consists of an inverted or cone-shaped vine arrangement, that is, there are a pair of vines over a single vine with the vine tips also curving right and the vine showing distinct grape clusters. This reverse type appears to be only found on some 1787 reverses, such as F, H, K, P, and Q, that were mated with Buell Mailed Bust Right obverses and during later Machin's Mills reuse of old dies in other variously dated combinations.

Type E

This final reverse type is the use of the British-type shield, on 1788 Vermont reverse U¹¹ with the 1787 "small head" obverse Miller 1. British-type shields are also found on some very rare "1786" counterfeit Connecticut coppers, Miller 2.4-D and 2.5-V.

In summary, five major types of designs appear on the reverse shield of Connecticut coppers. These types are usually associated with distinct obverse designs, e.g., the 1785 types, the 1787 Mailed Bust Right types, etc. The blank Type 2 reverse could suggest that this detail was "expendable" when the die sinkers were having trouble keeping up with the demand for new dies. If one assumes that each die cutter had their own style that they used consistently, this discussion of Connecticut reverse die types can suggest or support other evidence on the minimum number of die cutters involved in the series.

Finally, on another issue of possible relevance concerning the use of the Connecticut state seal on coins is the fact that the colonial tokens attributed to Higley have three hammers on the reverse of some varieties. These are also arranged similar to the grape vines on Connecticut paper currency of the period, and the designs on these coppers included a pointing hand to strengthen the association with the official state seal. The use of hammers instead of vines by Higley could be interpreted as some comment about the future of industry and commerce in Connecticut (mining and metal working instead of agriculture), but exploring this suggestion is another story.

Endnotes:

¹ Dickeson, M.W. 1860, *The American Numismatic Manual*, 2nd Ed., Lippencott, Philadelphia, PA.

² Crosby, S.S. 1875, *The Early Coins of America* (TAMS reprint 1965).

³ Hall, T.P. 1892, *A Descriptive List of the Coppers Issued by Authority for the State of Connecticut for the Year 1787*, Boston, MA.

⁴ Miller, H.C. 1920, *The State Coinage of Connecticut*, Amer. J. Num. 53, NY.

⁵ Breen, W. 1988, *Complete Encyclopedia of United States and Colonial Coins*, FCI Press, NY.

⁶ Mossman, P.L. 1992, *Weight Analysis of Abel Buell's Connecticut Coppers*, pp. 103-126, Money of Pre-Federal America, American Numismatic Society, NY.

⁷ Newman, E.P. 1958, *A Recently Discovered Coin Solves a Vermont Numismatic Enigma*, pp. 531-542, Centennial Publication, American Numismatic Society, NY.

⁸ Crosby. 1875, pg 209.

⁹ Newman, E.P. 1990, *The Early Paper Currency of America*, 3rd Ed. Krause Publications, Iola, WI.

¹⁰ Trudgen, G.A. 1990, *John Bailey, New York City Coiner*, CNL 30(2): pp.1153-1185.

¹¹ Bressett, K. 1976. *Vermont Copper Coinage*, pp.173-198, Studies on Money In Early America, American Numismatic Society, NY.

MISCELLANEOUS RUMBLINGS, RAMBLINGS AND REPORTS FROM THE EDITOR.

Our ***special thanks*** to everyone associated with the two awards recently received by ye Editor - -

- (1) NLG Award - The Colonial Newsletter Extraordinary Merit.
- (2) CNL Patrons Plaque - In Recognition of Exceptional Service as Editor on the Occasion of CNL 100.

And, in addition, our ***very special thanks*** to Mike Ringo for his donation to the CNL Reference Collection of two 1773 Virginia Halfpence, a rare 10-W and his newly discovered 5-H as well as a personal gift of a Vermont Ryder 16 contemporaneously engraved on the obverse with ye Editor's initials "JCS" - - it is quite a curiosity and we anticipate having photographs of these specimens available sometime in the near future.

Finally - - just after Christmas day, there arrived at ye Editor's home via UPS a beautiful leather & cloth handbound copy with gold embossed spine a "Presentation Volume" of CNL-100 containing a number of introductory pages each containing four graphical "pin-up notes" secured by a "push pin" and presenting on each note a short handwritten personal message to ye Editor from each of the authors and editorial contributors to CNL-100. The binding was accomplished by Grace Bindings of St. Simons Island, Georgia. Ye Editor has no idea who may have instigated this project but he does appreciate very much the effort and thought that went into the preparation and production of a beautiful work. ***My sincere and very personal thanks to each and every one of you.***

Speaking of photographs as we were several paragraphs earlier, we are slowly working toward converting our CNL photographic resources into digital format which will significantly improve our ability to publish images as well as to transmit images to those who want them, but it also requires our Patrons to, in some degree, become computer literate and to become e-mail enabled. This is a transition that will take place, we believe, within the next 10 years to a degree that the capability to electronically receive and store images will have become as common place as voice telephone usage is today. As of today, only about 15% of our Patrons are e-mail enabled but the number continues to grow and many of those who have e-mail addresses can and do communicate very frequently with ye Editor.

Promises - promises - promises

In CNL-100 we made a number of promises that we have been unable to keep for several reasons and which have also delayed the present issue. By way of explanation - - (1) we almost totally exhausted our backlog of material for publication. CNL-100 was the approximate equivalent of four regular issues and, from one perspective, wiped out the available material in our Patrons inventory of articles and ideas. It has taken considerably more time than anticipated to restore our supply of material for publication - - (2) Ye Editor has had some health problems during the past year that have caused a substantive slow-down in his energy levels and activities.

Those problems are hopefully well on the way toward being corrected; however, as a direct result ye Editor was unable to complete two items which were scheduled for the current issue. These were the illustrations and discussions of the apparent use of logos in the printing of the Vermont Notes of 1781 and the illustrations of composite notes which we had promised for CNL-101 on page 1561.

Additionally, there occurred a number of problems in CNL-100 involving page numbers which may also have been the results of

the combined pressures to meet a deadline before leaving on a trip planned for a granddaughter plus problems with our laser printer and similar frustrations. We were able to correct a few of these such as the numbering of pages 1530A and 1530B, but ye Editor has no explanation whatsoever as to how we managed to get page 2 positioned between pages 1552 and 1554! The most frustrating of these pagination problems was that in the process of renumbering pages we failed to renumber references so that a notation that endnotes are to be found on a given page actually appear a page earlier or later. Yuch! Such are the joys of desktop publishing.



Now - let us

ASK the EDITORS

Here are a number of comments on previous "Ask the Editors" subjects. These are *all* from John Kleeberg of ANS/NY.

Regarding AE-1 "The Stepney Hoard" (see pages 1383 and 1401):

One other coin, other than those listed so far in the CNL, is known to have been in the Stepney Hoard; this is the Vermont 1788 R-16, Bressett 15-S. It was lot 1282 of the Norweb sale; the pedigree given was Stepney Hoard-Walter Breen-Richard Picker 1959-Emery May Norweb. I have noticed no other coins in that auction as being in the Stepney Hoard, but I could have slipped up on a few.

The probable date for Eric P. Newman acquiring the counterfeits from the Stepney hoard would be May 1951. Breen didn't work at Stack's that long - - he gives May 1951 as the date in his autobiography published in *Penny Wise*, 1977.

By the way, I personally think the Stepney hoard is legitimate. I don't think the pristine surfaces of the specimens is a valid argument against them. They may have been cleaned, but most of our best coins come from buried hoards. Some coins react with the soil; some

don't. I am not a trained chemist, but it is possible that the chemicals attacked the iron kettle first, and so the coins were spared. This is just a matter of opinion, however.



On AE-7 "Die Orientation of London Elephant Tokens" (see pages 1402 & 1403):

The ANS has five authentic elephant tokens in its collection (two London, three Carolinas). All are medal turn. The ANS also has thirteen fakes in its collection. Nearly all the fakes are medal turn as well, unfortunately, although one is off a bit, at one o'clock. Medal turn is common in the seventeenth century. Many, maybe most seventeenth century tradesmen's tokens are medal turn. The New Yorke in America token is medal turn - that was one of the arguments I used for a seventeenth century date. Massachusetts silver switches from coin turn to medal turn early in the Oak Tree series. During the eighteenth century coin turn prevails - so you should record the die axis if you have a coin which is significantly off from six o'clock.



On AE-11 "Farthings in America" (see pages 1409 & 1470):

The question of the circulation of farthings in the American colonies is an interesting one. I believe they circulated to some, albeit limited, extent. Mr. Oppenheim has found most of the relevant references on the matter, and is right to focus on the coppers from the Mermaid, which was probably one of the largest injections of farthings ever. A hoard with over fifty farthings dated 1702-1740, with a few shillings, was found at Elmsford, near White Plains, New York, in 1895 (see the *Numismatist*, 1895, vol. 8, p. 242). During the excavations which turned up the halfpennies in the Philadelphia Highway hoard, two farthings were found: one 169x, William III tin, the other a 1774 George III. (See Newman and Gaspar in the *Numismatist*, 1978, vol. 91, pp. 453-467). Two other

isolated finds of farthings: a 1718 farthing found in the wreck of the sloop Boscawen (see George Bass, ed. *Ships and Shipwrecks of the Americas*, (London, 1988, p. 146) and a 1720 farthing found around Fort St. Joseph, Michigan; see "Thrilled by Georgian Coppers? It depends on where you find them! An Etching of Michigan's Colonial Past" in *The Searcher* (Grayshott, Hindhead, Surrey, England, April 1991) vol. 6 No. 8, pp. 34-35.

Mr. Oppenheim is probably right about the prevalence of George I and George II farthings, and the scarcity of George III; the 1774 George III farthing is the only documentation of a George III farthing found in North America that I have come across so far. There are fashions in coppers just as in everything else, and the seventeenth century liked their coppers to be farthing size or smaller, the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century liked larger, halfpenny size coppers, and around about the middle of the nineteenth century the fashion swung back to small size coppers again. (This is one of the reasons I decided that the New Yorke in America token had to be of seventeenth century rather than eighteenth century manufacture.) The authorities clearly thought that farthings served some purpose, though, because the two state mints set up on United States soil in the eighteenth century, the Boston mint and the Philadelphia mint, both coined farthings -- although they called them half cents. Bob Julian at one point made the observation to me that half cents were fairly essential, so long as the Spanish colonial silver continued to circulate; people want to get their 2 1/2 cents back when they tender a real for a dime purchase. He believes that occasional minting of half cents or half dimes or the like by the Philadelphia mint is related to the fluctuating supplies of Spanish colonial silver. This may apply to farthings as well.

I have been told of one counterfeit farthing (albeit George II) which I believe to be of American manufacture, and that is a cast counterfeit 1749 farthing, which Philip Mossman owns. There were so many genuine 1749 farthing and halfpence in circula-

tion in the thirteen colonies and the early United States that most cast counterfeits of that date are probably of American manufacture.



And now a **new** "Ask the Editors" question from John Kleeberg:

AE-15 The Mendes Cohen Hoard of Virginia Halfpence

Now, since the interesting thing about CNL is the questions, and it is unfair to answer questions without providing new ones to puzzle over:

I would like to know more about the Mendes Cohen hoard of Virginia halfpence. Were all the die varieties now known to us represented in it, or just certain die varieties? On looking through the ANS collection of Virginia halfpence, I note the following varieties with the characteristic brilliant red uncirculated look of specimens from the hoard: Newman varieties 4-G (two examples), 6-X, 20-N, 20-X, 22-S, 23-Q, 24-K, 25-M (three examples), 27-J, 26-Y and 27-J. Two specimens are worn enough that they certainly do not come from that hoard: 8-H and 20-N (note that the ANS thus has 20-N in both uncirculated condition ex Cohen and in well circulated condition). There are also two coins which *possibly* come from the Cohen hoard: 3-F and 7-D. These coins are in uncirculated condition, but they do not have the mint-red look of Cohen coins. There are two specimens depicted in the plates in Newman's book which are worn enough that they cannot come from the Cohen hoard, namely obverses 8 and 9. I also note that Breen, in his pioneering January 1952 article on American coin hoards, says (p. 17) "Rumor has it that the find was made in one of the government buildings in Annapolis." I presume this rumor is a red herring, and that Newman's identification of the find spot as Richmond, and the date of the acquisition of the hoard to between 1780-1803 by Israel Cohen (as

Newman explains in his 1962 "Additions to Coinage for Colonial Virginia") supersedes Breen's earlier conjectures. In his *Encyclopedia*, Breen gives Richmond as the findspot for the Cohen hoard.

First - -
some thoughts from
CNL Associate Editor Mike Hodder

Mike Hodder replies that Kleeberg has answered the first part of his own question: not all Newman varieties were in the Cohen Hoard since not all known routinely survive in red uncirculated condition. Mike knows of no inventory record of the Cohen Hoard of Virginia halfpence that would reflect Eric Newman's variety listings. Virginia's are a generally neglected issue. Most collectors want just one, for the type. A few collect the two Red Book "types" (i.e., with and without a stop after GEORGIVS). A tiny few collect by Newman numbers, but so few that the major auction houses don't bother varietizing the Virginia's they catalogue. If curator Kleeberg wanted to do a statistical analysis of the Virginia varieties often found in spotty red uncirculated condition he'd possibly wind up with an approximation of the ones that were originally represented in the Cohen Hoard. The work would not be easy or quickly finished, however, and much varietizing would have to be done from catalogue illustrations and thus would not be entirely reliable.

And - -
some observations from
CNL Associate Editor Gary Trudgen

I scanned Veach's "The Generation Newsletter of The 1773 - Colonial Virginia Copper Halfpence" for any information he may have published on the subject hoard and found nothing.

Since the Cohen family slowly sold off the hoard until 1929 and Newman didn't study the die varieties until 1956, die variety information could have never been compiled on the hoard. The only way this could be accom-

plished today would be for someone to slowly compile die variety information on specimens that are uncirculated with mint red showing. Of course, this method would be open to error because there may be some mint red coins extant which aren't from the hoard. Nevertheless, it should be a good approximation of what varieties were in the Cohen hoard. Unfortunately auction records would be almost useless in this exercise because catalogers seldom attribute Virginia halfpence by die variety. So the researcher would have to survey collectors, study institution collections, etc. to obtain his data.

And finally - -
from ye Editor

As always - comments from our Patrons on this subject will be sincerely appreciated. Our Editors are knowledgeable but certainly not all-knowing. We can kick-off a discussion but we need follow-up from our Patrons as well.

I suppose that it is unnecessary to remind our Patrons regarding these various discussions of die varieties of Virginia Halfpence of 1773 in the Cohen Hoard that Eric Newman's work on the *Coinage for Colonial Virginia* was not published until 1956 (as Gary indicated) as ANS Numismatic Notes and Monographs No. 135. Accordingly, there is no way that an accurate tabulation of die varieties in the Cohen Hoard can be accomplished; only roughly approximated as Mike Hodder has pointed out.

To further compound the problem it is almost impossible, today, to build a die variety set of 1773 Virginia Halfpence simply because our numismatic dealers are not sufficiently qualified in the series to attribute the coins by the Newman die designations. Ye Editor knows of only two or three individuals whom he would trust to accurately identify these die varieties - - even the acquisition of a set of full tone photographs is almost impossible. If any of our Patrons can furnish photographs of these die varieties it would be very helpful. CNL has been attempting to accomplish this feat for a number of years but has been notably unsuccessful.

JCS